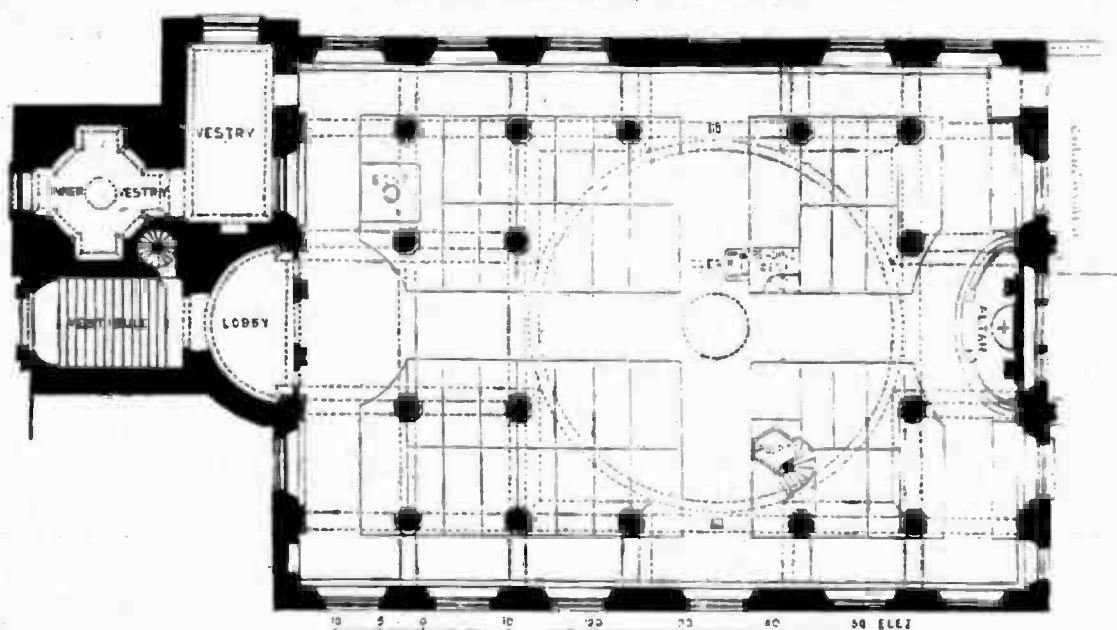


## PLAN OF ST. STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK.



## RESTORATION OF ST. STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK.

So long ago as the early part of 1847, we made an appeal in favour of the reparation, if not restoration, of St. Stephen's, Walbrook,\* and showed the miserable condition into which the church had fallen. Since then we have often recurred to the subject, and we are glad now to record the completion of one instalment of the works required. The sum of money at the disposal of the churchwardens was small, and they adopted the (questionable) course of advertising for proposals and estimates from architects. Seven or eight architects responded, and Mr. John Turner was selected to conduct the repairs. Tenders were then obtained from builders, and one by Mr. Young at 1,068*l.*, was ultimately accepted.

The lead has been set right; the walls have been coloured, the stone-work scraped, and the interior fittings made complete. The total cost is about 1,200*l.*†

We may briefly say, as to the early history of the church, that according to Dugdale, Eudo, steward of the household to King Henry I. (1,100 to 1,135), gave this church, which then stood on the west side of the brook, to the monastery of St. John, at Colchester. In 1428, Robert Chicheley, mayor of London, acting as the executor of Sir William Standon, mayor, purchased of the Grocers' Company, and presented to the parish, a piece of ground on the east side of Walbrook, in order that they might build a new church; and in the following year he laid the first stone of a fabric 125 feet long and 67 feet broad, which was finished in 1439; he himself giving a sum of money in aid of the works. After the destruction of this church by fire in 1666, the present building was erected on the same site. The first stone was laid on the 16th of October, 1672, and the church was mainly completed in 1679. Other works in the vestry, &c. were done in 1682, as we shall presently see. The church, we should mention, is for the use of the united parishes of St. Stephen and St. Bennet Sherehog.‡

Sir Christopher Wren, as all the world knows, was the architect of St. Stephen's. It is stated that the church was "rebuilt at the public expense, except the wainscoting, which was given by the Grocers' Company, the patrons of the living."§ The church records, while they bear out this statement in the main,

show that money was also subscribed by individuals for the rebuilding of the church, and that a sum of money was lent (if not paid) by the parish to "the Chamber of London" for the same purpose. Our dip into the parish chest was short and hurried, but it sufficed to show that it contains some very curious and interesting documents: these should forthwith be put into order and methodically examined.\* According to the "Parentalia" (as quoted by Elmes), Wren's services to the parish church "were given for a salary of only 100*l.* a year:" he had no direct payment from Walbrook. In the book of payments, anno 1680, are noted various sums paid for work in connection with the church,—supplementary to the main outlay, which does not appear,—including a small sum to Mr. Strong, Sir Christopher's master-mason, by whom the church was built.† There is one entry,—to Mr. Edy, bricklayer, and Mr. Cooke, the surveyor, 10*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* The next entry shows the kind feeling entertained towards Wren by the parish. It is as follows:—"F<sup>r</sup>. for a hogshead of Claret w<sup>ch</sup> was presented to S<sup>r</sup> Christopher Wren £00*9.* 10*s.* 00*d.*" Mr. Ward, in his "Lives of the Gresham Professors," gives the following extract from an old parish vestry book,—communicated to him by the Rev. Dr. Wilson, then rector of St. Stephen's:—"August 24. Ordered that a present of 20 guineas be made to the lady of Sir Christopher Wren, as a testimony of the regard the parish has for the great care and skill that Sir Christopher showed in the rebuilding of our church."

In a MS. list of miscellaneous papers belonging to the church, we noticed an entry, "Drafts and Schemes for building the Church:" these should be looked for.

Amongst the bills is one for "Joyner's Work," begun Jan. 7, 1678, and ended June 7, 1679, in which appear these charges:—For the pulpit, "made ready and finished," 75*l.* 5*s.*; altar-piece, 54*l.* 10*s.*; and communion-table, 12*l.* 10*s.* These charges, if we noticed correctly, did not include the carving. The bill of William Newman, carver, dated April 27, 1680, contains, amongst other items, these:—"for the King's Arms (at that time part of the altar-piece), 8*l.* 10*s.*;" "for carving y<sup>e</sup> Communion Table, 6*l.*" For eight small figures on the font-cover he charged 6*l.*, or 15*s.* each.

Amongst the papers there is an agreement of one moiety of the sum thus raised was applied to the rebuilding of parochial churches and one-fourth to St. Paul's.

\* Amongst these papers are two grants from Henry VI. for a perpetual chantry nigh the north porch of St. Paul's; also a third document, dated the thirty-sixth year of the reign of the same king (1457), which has a very interesting initial letter.

† The cost of the church is stated to have been 7,642*l.* 13*s.*

for certain works between John Whiteing and James Darrell, churchwardens; Thomas Creether, joiner; and William Newman, carver. This is dated Dec. 8, 1661, and contains an arbitration clause:—any difference that might arise was to be settled by "City Viewers or Surveyors."

We must now, however, look to the church itself, of which we give an engraved plan and a view of the interior, looking towards the south-west.

	Feet.	Inches.
The length of the church, exclusive of the vestibule, is	85	0
The width is	60	0
The height from the paving to the top of the order	24	2
The height to the base of the dome	49	6
The height to the base of the lantern	60	7
The lantern is, in height	49	5
And the total height is	70	0

The church, it is said, will accommodate about 800 persons: we should not have guessed so.

An error has been very generally fallen into with respect to the dimensions of this church: in some descriptions of it the length is stated to be 75 feet, and the width, 56 feet.

The plan is a parallelogram, and is divided by four rows of columns; the two central columns between the third, fourth, and fifth intercolumniations are omitted on each side, and afford an area of 43 feet square, over which expands the dome, surmounted by the cupola, or lantern. By this arrangement a cruciform effect is given to the design; the intercolumniations of the base, transepts, and chancel being equal in width, viz., 17 feet.

The spaces between the walls and the columns on the north and south sides are not more than 6 feet 6 inches in width, whereas the intercolumniations are 11 feet, which may be considered to detract from the goodness of the plan.

The columns employed are of the Corinthian order, crowned with an enriched entablature of more peculiarity than beauty, from the cornice of which rise the vaulted and groined ceilings, and the walls of the clerestory.

The square area at the intersection of the transepts is brought into a circle by means of light arches, springing from column to column; the spandrels formed by the arches are filled with shields and ornaments of uncertain form. The dome itself rises upon an enriched composite cornice, and is divided into four panels in height, sixteen at the base, eight in the second tier, sixteen in the third, and eight in the fourth, making altogether forty-eight panels. The ornaments in the second tier of coffers consist of very boldly relieved palm-leaved branches and rosettes.

\* See Vol. V. p. 273.

† An immense number of graves under the floor of the church have been arched over and sealed with concrete.

‡ On the north side of Pancras-lane is a small inclosed piece of ground, and upon a stone let into the wall of a house adjoining at the west end is a record is inscribed the following record:—"Before the dreadful fire, anno 1666, stood the parish church St. Bennet Sherehog."

§ Elmes's "Parentalia," p. 314. Money was raised for rebuilding the city by tax on coals: three-fourths